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LETTER DATED 16 MARCH 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose a copy of the letter from the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission, Richard Butler, to the President of the Security Council, dated 11 March 1999.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and of its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. Peter BURLEIGH
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 11 March 1999 from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) addressed to the President of the Security Council

By letter of 28 February 1999, the Permanent Representative of Iraq transmitted to the Secretary-General a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq. These communications were circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/1999/219).

In both the above letters, reference is made to the spread of foot and mouth disease among Iraqi livestock, and it is said that this results from a shortage of vaccine, "particularly since work in the laboratory that was producing the vaccine was halted when the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) destroyed all its equipment." This does not accord with the facts.

I believe it is important to provide you, and through you the members of the Security Council, with the pertinent facts in this case. These are given in the annex to this letter. I have already provided the same information on this issue to the Secretary-General.

I would be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER

## Enclosure

## Production of foot and mouth disease vaccine in Iraq

In 1982, a facility was installed by a foreign company at Daura, in Iraq, intended to produce 12 million doses per year of foot and mouth disease vaccine. According to Iraq, the best production level ever achieved was between 1 and 2 million doses per year. This plant was declared by Iraq to the Special Commission in November 1991 as a civilian facility for the production of vaccines. Following on the Commission's own inspections, analyses and investigations, Iraq admitted, in July 1995, that Daura was not a purely civilian facility, but had been used for biological warfare agent production, research and development.

According to the 1995 disclosure, the facility was taken over in 1990 by Iraq's Technical Research Centre for the biological warfare programme. In Iraq's own declarations, it is stated that large-scale production of the biological warfare agent botulinum toxin took place at this facility, using some of the equipment procured for foot and mouth disease vaccine production. Research was also undertaken on viral agents for Iraq's biological warfare programme, including camelpox, enterovirus 70 and rotavirus. Iraq further declared that a genetic engineering research and development programme was initiated for biological warfare purposes at the facility.

As a result of modifications introduced by Iraq to the facility for the production of biological weapons, foot and mouth disease vaccine was no longer produced. Production of this vaccine was briefly resumed in 1992, following a reconfiguration of the facility after the Gulf war, as part of Iraq's attempt to conceal its biological warfare programme. After September 1992, Iraq discontinued all production of vaccine, although staff and equipment remained at the site. Thereafter, through the good offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Iraq imported foot and mouth disease vaccine, as it had done previously.

After Iraq's eventual admission, in 1995, that it had had an extensive biological warfare programme, the Commission, in accordance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991), proceeded to supervise the destruction of installations, facilities and equipment which had been used in that proscribed programme. Accordingly, in 1996, 28 pieces of equipment at Daura, which had been identified by Iraq as used for biological warfare production, were removed from the facility and destroyed by Iraq under the Commission's supervision, and special air-handling equipment at the facility was disabled. Some 40 major pieces, originally imported for the production of foot and mouth disease vaccine, remained, as their use in the biological warfare programme had not been established.

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, it is thus false to state that the production of foot and mouth disease vaccine was halted when the Commission destroyed all the equipment at Daura. Production of the vaccine was halted unilaterally by Iraq in September 1992. Furthermore, not all the equipment at the facility was destroyed by UNSCOM in 1996.

Foot and mouth disease vaccine is on the list of items subject to the Commission's export/import monitoring system and thus its import should be reported to the Commission. However, the Commission's mechanism in this respect is purely one of notification and imposes no impediment on import.

11 March 1999

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